

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 AID-05 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-08 FRB-03
INR-10 NSAE-00 USIA-06 TRSE-00 XMB-02 OPIC-03
SP-02 LAB-04 SIL-01 OMB-01 /056 W
-----059263 200933Z /15

R 200800Z MAR 78
FM AMEMBASSY MANAMA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5953
INFO AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI
AMEMBASSY DOHA
AMEMBASSY KUWAIT
AMEMBASSY MUSCAT
AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

C O N F I D E N T I A L MANAMA 0681

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: BA, IN
SUBJECT: INDIAN ATTEMPT TO REGULATE WAGES/CONDITIONS FOR INDIAN
NATIONALS IN BAHRAIN

1. BAHRAINI OFFICIALS AND MAJOR EMPLOYERS ARE UP IN ARMS ABOUT
ATTEMPT BY INDIAN GOVERNMENT TO PRESCRIBE WAGES AND CONDITIONS
FOR INDIANS EMPLOYED IN BAHRAIN. INDIAN EMBASSY HAS CIRCULATED
LIST OF SALARIES AND FRINGE BENEFITS "PRESCRIBED" FOR VARIOUS
JOBS INDIANS MIGHT HOLD HERE, FROM ARCHITECT TO LABORER.

2. BAHRAIN OFFICIALS HAVE CALLED INDIAN AMBASSADOR TO TASK AND
POINTED OUT TO HIM THAT WAGES PAID IN BAHRAIN ARE NONE OF GOI'S
BUSINESS. IF INDIANS WANT TO WORK HERE, AND AT LEAST 25,000 DO,
THEN THEY MUST ACCEPT WAGES MARKET FORCES DICTATE. WAGES AND
FRINGE BENEFITS GIVEN IN INDIAN EMBASSY DOCUMENT ARE HIGHER
THAN MOST EMPLOYERS PAY FOR INDIANS. UNTIL GOB SETTLES THIS
QUESTION WITH GOI, ISSUANCE OF WORK PERMITS FOR INDIANS WANTING
TO COME HERE HAS BEEN SUSPENDED. BAHRAIN PETROLEUM CO. UPSET
THAT SOME THIRTY SKILLED INDIAN WORKERS COMPANY HAS BEEN COUNTING
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ON WERE DENIED ENTRY FEW DAYS AGO.

3. COMMENT. WAGES HERE ARE HIGH BY INDIAN STANDARDS BUT
INDIAN EMBASSY AND A FEW OFFICIALS IN MINISTRY OF LABOR ARE
CONCERNED THAT LIVING CONDITIONS, PARTICULARLY FOR UNSKILLED
WORKERS, ARE VERY SUBSTANDARD. HOWEVER, MANNER IN WHICH INDIAN
EMBASSY PROCEEDED, WITH SHOTGUN APPROACH AND APPARENTLY WITHOUT

ANY CONSULTATION WITH GOB, AND INFLUENCE OF MAJOR EMPLOYERS
MAKE IT VERY LIKELY THAT GOI INITIATIVE IN THIS AREA WILL BE
STRONGLY REBUFFED. AS DEPT AWARE, GOB INCREASINGLY CONCERNED
THAT THERE ARE TOO MANY INDIANS HERE AND THAT THEIR SKILLS ARE
OF TOO LOW AN ORDER. THIS INCIDENT PROBABLY WILL SPUR GOB
EFFORTS TO FIND OTHER SOURCES OF EXPATRIATE WORKERS, MOST
LIKELY IN KOREA, THAILAND AND SINGAPORE. IT MAY ALSO,
HOPEFULLY, LEAD GOB TO LOOK MORE CLOSELY AT POOR CONDITIONS
IN WHICH MANY OF UNSKILLED EXPATRIATE WORKERS LIVE.
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Message Attributes

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